

Army Corps of Engineers releases national report on water resources challenges

WASHINGTON, May 14, 2001 – Ten major water resources challenge areas facing the nation are the topic of a national report released today from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The national report documents the results of 16 public “listening sessions” held across the country from June to November 2000. The listening session forums gathered people of varied interests to identify concerns regarding the nation’s water resources and to clarify the federal role in addressing those concerns.

“The listening sessions were lead by an independent facilitator and attended by a broad cross section of people across the nation with different outlooks on the nation’s water challenges,” said Mark Gmitro, the sessions’ program manager. “Our role was simply to listen and gather their opinions. It was very enlightening.”

The national report focuses on the federal role and will be used to make informed procedural and institutional changes within the federal government. It is also being presented to Congress and other decision-makers for consideration.

The 3,400 concerns identified by listening session participants were grouped into 10 general challenges.

1. *Marine transportation system*: Transform the marine transportation system to meet 21st century demands.
2. *Restoring and protecting the environment*: Restore degraded environment resulting from past development and seek to protect the environment in new development.
3. *Managing watersheds holistically*: Achieve balance between social needs, economic development and the environment within an entire watershed.
4. *Floodplain and coastal zone management*: Protect Americans from severe storms/natural disasters to minimize social, economic, and environmental impacts.
5. *Responding to disasters*: Plan for, prepare for, and respond to emergencies resulting from natural disasters and technological emergencies.
6. *Community water infrastructure*: Consider and plan for the implications of aging water resources infrastructure, urban growth and development, and water supply and treatment on a community’s ability to be prosperous and sustainable.
7. *Regulating dredge and fill activities*: Ensure fair, adequate and efficient permitting to protect wetlands and other waters of the U.S. from development and improper use.
8. *Recreation*: Provide recreation opportunities for all Americans and their guests on national lands and waters.
9. *Project processes*: Ensure significant communication, information, public input, and analysis for successful project development.
10. *Institutional changes*: Streamline and improve federal water resources authorities, laws, policies, and funding to better align the federal government’s priorities, goals, and objectives.

The full national report, executive summary of the national report, and reports from each of the listening sessions are online at <http://www.wrsc.usace.army.mil/iwr/waterchallenges/>.